

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 769.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1878.

PRICE 1½d.

HAPS AND MISHAPS OF SUBMARINE CABLES.

THOUGH in former articles we have described the process of manufacturing submarine cables, we may briefly remind our readers that the substances used are several in number. First there is the copper wire or wires which are insulated in a covering of gutta-percha; and second there is a sheathing, composed of hemp, which, like gutta-percha, is a non-conducting substance; and lastly, the strong twisted wires which envelop and strengthen the whole.

Sir William Thomson, one of the greatest living authorities on the subject, has said that the very safest place for a submarine cable is the sea, sea-water being the very best preservative for gutta-percha. It was therefore thought in the early days of cables that they would be of a practically infinite durability when once submerged; but experience has told a different tale. It shews that the average life of a cable is only about twelve or fourteen years. Were sea-water the only thing a cable had to encounter in the 'slimy bottom of the deep,' there would be good reason to expect a long life for cables; but there are many sources of mishap and trouble to them, some of which could hardly be conjectured beforehand.

It was foreseen that near the land, where storm-waves move the whole depth of water, the cable would be rasped on the rocks and worn through or pulled forcibly asunder; a common accident on the old Orkney cables. But in the depths of the ocean, where all is still, it was thought no harm could come unless, by rare coincidence, a sinking ship settled down upon it. No such instance has yet appeared; but the cable has encountered a far worse enemy in the teeth of a tiny sea-creature, the *Limnoria terebrans*. In 1865, Dr W. H. Russell, as *Times* correspondent with the Atlantic Cable expedition of 1865 wrote: 'But as a mite would in all probability never have been seen but for the invention of cheese, so it may be that there is some undeveloped creation waiting *perdu* for

the first piece of gutta-percha which comes down to arouse his faculty and fulfil his functions of life—a gutta-percha boring and eating *teredo* who has been waiting for his meal since the beginning of the world.' While the doctor wrote these words his prophecy was being actually fulfilled. The borer was at work! The Levant Cable, laid in 1858, and taken up next summer, was found to be beset by 'millions of small shell-fish or snails,' accompanied by small worms, which had completely destroyed the hemp of the outer sheathing, and eaten circular holes in the gutta-percha core. Professor Huxley on examining these shells wrote: 'The specimens you sent me remove all doubt as to the nature of the mischief-maker in the cable. It is a bivalve shell, the xylophaga, closely allied to the shipworm (*teredo*), but distinguished from it, among other peculiarities, by not lining its burrow with shelly matter. The xylophaga turns beautifully cylindrical burrows, always against the grain, in wood; and I have no doubt it perforated the hempen coating of the cable in the same way. On meeting the gutta-percha it seemed not to have liked it, and to have turned aside; thus giving rise to the elongated grooves which we see.'

In 1860 several pieces of cable were picked up off Minorca in the Mediterranean having the hemp between the steel wires eaten into holes with the regularity and spacing of a cribbage-board. The gutta-percha was also penetrated to various depths, and it did not seem from these that the *teredo*, as the borer was now called, had any dislike to this nutriment. Subsequently, the borer was found off the Norway coast and in the English and Irish Channels, where it did and still does great harm to the Irish cables. A part of the Dublin and Holyhead Cable was taken up, pierced in many places right through the core, directly inwards to the copper-wire, and the worms were found in the holes. Dr Carpenter examined these, and identified them as the *Limnoria lignorum* of Rathké, better known to British naturalists as the *Limnoria terebrans*. 'This,' says Dr Carpenter in his Report, 'is a most destructive creature, whose

ravages have long been a source of great injury to the woodwork of piers, bridges, harbour-works, &c.; often erroneously attributed to the borings of the "teredo." The *L. terebrans* is about a quarter-inch long, in body like a truncated maggot, with seven pair of small legs and a round head. From its small size it can readily wriggle its way between the iron guard-wires of a cable where they do not close up well. They have since been found in such widely distant seas as the Florida and Persian Gulfs, and it is believed that they are to be met with over the greater part of the world. It is startling to think what a destructive power this little worm possesses. A single unconscious meal of his might so affect a cable as to render it absolutely useless for the time being.

The repairing of submarine cables and the results of deep-sea soundings prior to laying, began to throw new light on the depths of the sea, and to suggest that life in a variety of forms might inhabit them. Further experiences strengthened this view, and naturalists bestirred themselves for new explorations. The expeditions of the *Porcupine* paved the way for the famous voyage of the *Challenger*.

The amount of submarine life that comes up on a cable which is taken up for repairs after being immersed for a year or two, is surprising. Three years ago, the writer was with a repairing expedition on the Pará to Cayenne section of the Western and Brazilian Company's Cables. We were chiefly at work off the island of Marajo, in the estuary of the Amazon. The cable had only been submerged about a month; yet it came on board the ship at places literally covered with barnacles; at others overgrown with submarine vegetation, crabs, and curious shells, often of singular delicacy and beauty. The sea-weeds were in great variety clinging to the cable, sometimes in thick groves of red and yellow algæ; slender, transparent, feathery grasses; red slimy fucoids, and tufts of amethyst moss. We found branching coralline plants upwards of a foot in height growing to the cable, the soft skeleton being covered with a fleshy skin, generally of a deep orange colour. Sometimes a sponge was found attached to the roots of these corals, and delicate calcareous structures of varied tints incrusting the stems of all these plants, and served to ornament as well as to strengthen them. Parasitic life seems to be as rife under these soft tepid waters as it is on the neighbouring tropical shores. Many star-fishes, zoophytes, and curious crabs and crustaceans were likewise fished up on the cable. The crabs were often themselves completely overgrown with the indigenous vegetation of the bottom, and so were scarcely distinguishable from it. Others, although not so covered, were found to have the same tints as the vegetation they inhabited, and even in structure somewhat resembled the latter. Others again were perfectly or partially transparent; and one most beautiful hyaline crab, new to science, united in its person several of the prevailing colours of the bottom. Its slender limbs, like jointed filaments of glass, were stained here and there of a deep topaz brown. Its snout, pointed like a needle, was of a deep scarlet; its triangular body was of a deep yellow; its eyes were green; and its tiny limbs of an amethyst blue.

Within a day after this cable had been laid, a

mysterious fault had occurred; and this we were in pursuit of. To our surprise, we found it to have been caused by the bites of some voracious fish. About thirty miles north of the Pará mouth of the Amazon we found the cable bitten in many places, and in some so severely that the iron guard-wires had been forcibly crushed aside, the cable penetrated to the conductor, and pieces of the animal's teeth left sticking in the core. Instances of cables having been damaged by the saw-fish were known before, both by us and doubtless by our readers. The saw-fish grubbing with its snout in the mud is supposed by Frank Buckland to encounter the cable; and becoming enraged at it, to deal it a sharp downward stroke with its saw, thereby piercing the cable from above, and in certain cases leaving its broken teeth jammed between the wires. But the bites we cut out were evidently due to another fish; for they shewed signs of having been made by a direct bite between a pair of powerful jaws. Pieces of teeth were found both on the upper and under side of a bitten place, shewing that both jaws had been at work. Of what the fish really is which tries its teeth on such expensive prey, nothing is certainly known. Naturalists have not yet explored these virgin waters. The cable has been bitten again and again since it was submerged. It lies over the surface of the coral reef which fringes that coast, and where it spans the jagged projections of the coral rock, will offer a tempting bait to the big and strange fishes which are known to haunt the caverns of a reef.

Fish are not the only large animals who have tried to make a meal or a plaything out of a cable. Underground cables have been found eaten by both rats and mice. In Bristol, a year or two ago, a company of rats made their way into the street pipes, and devoured the gutta-percha coating of the street cables. Not long since at Dawlish a mouse built her nest and reared her progeny in one of these pipes, and apparently supported both herself and her household on the gutta-percha of the wires. No doubt as the current passed at times while she was gnawing, the little creature felt a tickling sensation of the palate, which fairly puzzled its tiny understanding and possibly disturbed its innocent feast.

A curious submarine accident occurred a few years ago in the Persian Gulf Cable. The cable suddenly broke down faulty. The position of the fault was localised by shore-tests, and a ship despatched to raise the cable and repair it. It was duly grappled; and after a great deal of labour, caused by the extraordinary weight of the cable in hauling up, they succeeded in raising it to the surface, when they found, much to their amusement as well as surprise, that they had 'caught a whale.' The body of a dead whale was found entangled in the coils of the cable, where the animal had netted and strangled itself.

The great majority of breakages result from the fouling of ships' anchors. Nor do the skippers of these defaulting ships in every case furnish reports of what they have accidentally done, although it would be of great service to the Company which owns the cable. Every one in the telegraph world has heard the story of Mr Hockin's feat in this way. Mr Hockin, one of the most eminent electricians of the day, was on

his way home from Pernambuco after the laying of the cable from Europe to Brazil. The mail-steamer he was aboard of accidentally hooked the cable on her anchor outside of Lisbon. The captain, eager to get home, would simply have dropped the injured cable and passed on; but Mr Hockin represented to him the importance of the case, and prevailed upon him to delay a few hours. Then Mr Hockin extemporised a rude battery and signalling key out of some scrap metal on board, and succeeded in signalling along the broken cable to the shore. The shore replied. Receiving the signals on his tongue by the taste which the current made when it passed, he instructed the shore exactly where to find the breakage; whereby much delay and expense were saved the Company, who presented him with a handsome acknowledgment. Such is the story as we have heard it. Whether true in detail or not, the moral obviously is, that ships committing damages to cables should invariably report upon them.

High words passed between two rival Atlantic Companies on the subject of the mysterious breakages which occurred in 1875 and 1876 on the Direct United States Cable newly laid. These breakages were imputed by some to the machinations of the Anglo-American Company. They occurred off the American coast, one in seventy, the other in one hundred and twenty fathoms. Sir William Thomson and Mr Bramwell, C.E. reported on them as follows: 'The tapering down of the ends of the wires, characteristic of good ductile metal in act of breaking, combined with the general appearance of the broken cable, could admit of only one conclusion being drawn, and that the breakage was not due to any decayed or imperfect condition of cable, and also that it was not due to chafing of the cable against a rock, or to any influence of an abrading or of a crushing character; but that the breakage had occurred on a perfect cable and through thoroughly sound metal, and was caused by the whole having been torn asunder under a violent tensile strain.' This strain they thought to have been caused by the arm of a grapnel or the fluke of an anchor, by which the cable had been for a distance underrun, till the frayed hemp stopped it, when the final strain broke the cable. Mr Gaines, Superintendent of the Anglo-American Company, subsequently wrote, explaining that every year, with one exception, since it was laid in 1869, the Duxbury and St Pierre Cable of that Company had been broken through at least once by the anchors of fishing-smacks. These breaks, with one exception, were all within fifty miles of each other. Sometimes the skippers of the smacks reported on the breakages, but sometimes not. The exceptional year was 1874, the first year of the submersion of the Direct United States Cable, during which it also was untouched. A fishing-boat, it was argued, hooks the cable with its anchor, and while hauling in, the heavy ground-swell heaves up her bows, snapping the cable.

Besides these fisher-folk, there have been other human depredators of cables, especially in the benighted East. Coolies have been known to steal a river cable, cut it in pieces, and plant the bits, to grow more; and for a long time the Chinese proved very troublesome to the early

cables laid to China. Not only did they persistently cut it in two, because they believed it to be an evil demon or false joss; but after they had learned to fear it less, they appropriated the shore-ends, in order to make tea-nails out of the iron wires, while out of the copper of the core they manufactured ornaments for the person.

Ice sometimes ruptures cables, as, for instance, in the White Sea. These ice-breakages were for a time as mysterious as any other kind when they first appeared. Thus one gentleman, an officer in one of Her Majesty's scientific corps, wrote to the papers to explain that the ruptures in the White Sea Cables were due to the fact, which he claimed to have discovered, that the world was growing bigger, stretching itself, so to speak, and bursting its bounds. This suggestion is on a par with that of the lady who, after the failure to lay the 1858 Atlantic Cable, wrote to *The Times* suggesting that cables instead of being under-sea should be over-sea, and proposing Gibraltar Rock, the Peak of Teneriffe, and the Andes as convenient points of suspension!

Besides these mechanical foes to submarine cables, we may say in conclusion a few words about some more subtle disturbances which, if not exactly foes, are at least pests. We allude to magnetic storms and lightning.

It is well known that a display of the aurora borealis is always associated with disturbances of the earth's magnetic condition, so that delicate compass needles, and especially the magnetic needles of telegraph receiving instruments, are set in irregular motion. The 'magnetic storm' precedes, accompanies, and follows the aurora, so that with a suitably suspended magnet or magnetometer, an aurora can be predicted. Beyond the connection of the two, almost nothing is yet known about magnetic storms. The aurora is almost certainly caused by electric discharges in the higher atmosphere, like the beautiful display of colour made at lectures on electricity, by passing a current through tubes of highly rarefied gases. The abrupt erratic movements of the needle in magnetic storms, of course disturb the true indications of the mirror galvanometer used in working the telegraph, and cause false signals. But 'electric storms' or lightning are far more troublesome, and are even dangerous. The effects of lightning, or disturbances of the atmospheric electricity, are chiefly felt on land-lines. The lightning is attracted to the land-lines, raised as they are above the earth; and by those land-lines connected to cables, the subtle fluid would rush into the cable, committing incalculable damage, were it not that lightning protectors are inserted between the land-lines and the cable. These protectors take the form of a series of fine points inserted in the ground, or to use the technical phrase 'connected to earth,' across which the lightning leaps rather than enter the cable; or of fine wires inserted between the land-line and cable, which are fused by the lightning, and the connection of cable and land-line thereby broken.

These lightning-currents in telegraph lines, although they are thus ingeniously kept out of cables, often seriously interfere with overland messages. Instruments are sometimes completely destroyed by the violence of the 'earth-current,' as it is called, and in America more than one operator has been accidentally killed while on duty.

During thunder-storms, these earth-currents are naturally most violent. It is even possible on some lines to predict thunder-storms in the neighbourhood. While testing the Santa Cruz to St Thomas Cable, West Indies, we remember being able to tell when there was a thunder-storm and rain in the neighbouring islands, by the earth-currents in the cable disturbing our tests. When they were more violent than usual, we would generally learn subsequently that there had been heavy rain and thunder at St Thomas on the same day. Except for the telegraph, we should not have known of the existence of these 'earth-currents.' Their cause is yet a mystery, just as the connection between auroras and 'magnetic storms,' and these again with 'sun-spots,' is a mystery; but through the telegraph itself, we hope in time to learn more about them, so that our physicists may be enabled to unveil another great cosmical secret.

THE HAMILTONS.

CHAPTER IV.—SHE IS MY SISTER—ALMOST.

THE sitting-room at the farm had, as is usual with colonial rooms, two doors, one opening as I have described to the front veranda, the other leading out to the back-court, through which meals were carried from the kitchen. Just inside this back-door, Jack was seated one Saturday forenoon, reading a four months' old English newspaper with as keen a relish as home people have for their morning's *Times*. It was an oppressively hot day, and Robert had insisted on sending him indoors earlier than usual out of the mid-day sun.

'You must take a little care this first summer,' he had said, 'or we shall be having you laid up with sunstroke before you have become acclimatised.'

So he sat by the open door trying to catch the ghost of a cool breeze and reading his newspaper. Bessie was in her own room, and Bertie was taking his siesta, while Phyllis was in the kitchen preparing the dinner. Jack was entertained during the hour he sat there by the nondescript character of the levee she held at her kitchen-door. First came Sam, the general factotum of the household, a big slouching lad of thirteen, who wore such an old jacket that it was a marvel how it hung together, and a wide-awake hat without any brim to it.

'Please miss, master wants some chopped eggs, cos there's two broods of young turkeys comed out up at the hill-paddock, and master has a-drivin' of 'em into the shed.'

'That's good news Sam,' said Phyllis cheerily. 'Sit down here in the cool while I boil the eggs. Will you have a drink of tea?'

'Ess miss,' said Sam with a bashful grin, plucking off the brimless hat, as Phyllis had taught him to do in her presence.

In Australian kitchens, by the way, as in many of the humbler dwellings in Scotland, the teapot is absolutely never off the stove, and tea is being consumed all day by farm-servants. They seem to have an unlimited capacity for it, and at shearing-time and harvest it is sent out to the men by the bucketful.

The eggs were boiled and chopped, and Sam departed to provide for the wants of the interesting brood. Phyllis was seen by Jack from time to

time as she crossed the gloom within the kitchen-door, while out in the yard the sun poured down his fierce uninterrupted rays. The next arrival on the scene was Judy Maloney, a native of Erin, who drove up in a cart drawn by a very old white horse, which seemed delighted to be allowed to stand still, holding down its head, and only shaking its ears slightly by way of a gentle remonstrance to the flies. Judy lived about two miles off, and came weekly for the family washing. She had placed a chair in the cart, on which she sat in solitary state; and as she was attired in a grass-green gown, a straw bonnet trimmed with yellow ribbon, of which the design seemed to be to have as many streamers as possible, and a scarlet handkerchief round her neck, the effect of the whole was brilliant in the extreme.

'Sure, Miss Phyllis,' she said in a rather high-pitched voice, as that damsel came to the door, 'an' its meself is glad to see you lookin' so well this blessed day, an' the very marrow like to be melted in me bones.'

'It is very hot, Mrs Maloney. I have the clothes ready for you. Will you come in and have a cup of tea?'

'Well then, I would need to come down out of the cart, me dear, an' it is easier to sit still where I am. But if you will just give me the tea, I faith I will be glad to drink it, for I'm as dry as an old leather brogue.'

The tea was poured out of Phyllis's inexhaustible teapot and brought out, accompanied by a large slice of currant-cake.

'I was baking this morning, Mrs Maloney, and I thought I would make a little cake for you. I know Pat likes a bit of cake.'

'Well, indeed he does, poor man; an' it's but seldom he gets it,' said Judy. 'For what with the washin' an' the cleanin' an' the makin' an' the mendin', I have but little time for cakes an' the like of that. Ah! it was like your sweet self, me dear, to think of poor old Judy; the saints bless you for it, darlin'.'

'I hope they will,' said the girl, laughing. 'And how are all down your way doing, Mrs Maloney?'

'An' wasn't I up all last night with Mrs Murphy, that has two as beautiful twins as ever your eyes looked on!'

'Twins! poor woman!' said Phyllis commiseratingly. 'That makes six altogether. What a handful for her!'

'Well then, my dear, an' the ways of Providence is puzzling sometimes. I says to her this morning: "Mrs Murphy," says I, "as the Lord has denied the affliction of children to me an' Pat, just give me one of them two beauties, an' it's meself will be a mother to it, an' likewise Pat a father, or I'll know the reason why." For, Miss Phyllis darlin', you know I have two as fine cows as ever was calved on this island; an' the child would niver have wanted bit nor sup as long as I could give it. But what does Mrs Murphy do but fall a-crying and a-kissing of 'em both, an' says she, "Misthress Maloney," she says, "here is thanks to you for your kind offer; but to part with one of them blessed babbies I never could." Here Judy heaved a deep sigh, and emptying her cup, handed it back to Phyllis.

'Well, perhaps she was right,' said the girl. 'They say that when God sends a mouth He gives

something to feed it. I'll walk over to see her to-morrow, Mrs Maloney, and bring her some strong soup. Tell her so, please; and tell her I wish her good-luck of her children. Here are the clothes, and here is the cake wrapped up in paper.'

'I thank you kindly, mavourneen,' said Judy, turning her cart. 'An' a sight of your purty face will do the poor dear good. An' may the Blessed Virgin see your own dear missus safe through her throuble; an' any hour by day or night it's Judy Maloney will come when she is called.' With which adieu Mrs Maloney drove off, and as the rumble of the cart-wheels died in the distance, silence again settled down over the farm.

About a quarter of an hour passed quietly, and then the sound of a trotting horse was heard approaching, and presently a powerful bay, ridden by a stalwart young man, came into the yard.

'How do you do, Mr Campbell?' said Phyllis, coming to the door again.

The young man dismounted, and slipped his horse's bridle over a post which was erected in the yard for the purpose. He was a young Scotch farmer, quite a near neighbour of the Hamiltons, his farm being only twelve miles off. His face was at present of a deep crimson, partly from the heat, and partly from the excitement of seeing Phyllis, whom he admired greatly, though as yet he had 'never told his love.'

'Did you get your horse across the water easily?' she asked as they shook hands.

'O yes,' he answered; 'the float was on the other side, and I poled him over. He knows the way now, I think, Miss Phyllis, though it is so long since I have been here.'

'I suppose you have been busy, as we have. Our shearers only left this week, and we were all glad to see the last of them. We have had, as you are doubtless aware, an arrival since you were last here, Mr Hamilton's brother James. Will you come into the parlour and see him?'

Crossing the yard to where Jack was sitting, Phyllis introduced the two men to one another, and then disappeared to finish her cooking, leaving them to get on as they best might in each other's society. Jack thought the young man plain and sensible, and by no means difficult to talk to, as they discussed the shearing just finished and the harvest about to commence, and all the numberless details interesting to farmers. Only he noticed that whenever Phyllis came into the room, which she did presently to lay the cloth for dinner, the young Scotchman's manner became somewhat awkward and uneasy, while her slightest movements seemed to be fraught with an irresistible fascination. Jack noticed also that on these occasions he caught himself hating the Scotchman in quite an unreasonable manner; for what object, he asked himself, could he possibly have for feeling indisposed towards this good yeoman, with the smooth fair hair and brilliant complexion?

When Robert had come in and they were all seated at table, Mr Campbell unfolded his mission, bashfully and with many blushes. There was to be a dance at Glen Assynt, only five-and-twenty miles off; it was to be given by the bachelors of the neighbourhood—said neighbourhood meaning a circuit of forty miles—and they would one and

all consider any such festivity incomplete without the presence of Miss Phyllis. (These were early days; and where now the flourishing township of Glen Assynt stands, there were only a few scattered cottages; but the first store had just been built, and the ball was to be given in the large wareroom before the goods were moved into it.) Mr Campbell took from his pocket three elaborately written cards of invitation, which had been composed with care by the best penman among the bachelors; and one he delivered to Phyllis, one to Jack, and one to Bessie and her husband. The eyes of the first named sparkled and her cheeks flushed with pleasure, but she glanced dubiously at her sister.

'You can't go, Bessie,' she said hesitatingly; 'and I don't see how I can leave you.'

'Nonsense, child,' answered Bessie briskly. 'Do you think I am going to stand in the way of your pleasure? You have so few changes, Phyllis, you must go. Robert will stay and take care of me, and Jack will go and take care of you. So that is settled.'

Jack had been looking down rather superciliously at his card; a dance in a store with a lot of country lads and lasses was not particularly to his taste. And besides he was not at all sure that he wanted Phyllis for himself; yet he experienced a vague uneasiness at the idea of bringing her into the midst of all the bachelors of the neighbourhood to be doubtless the belle of their ball.

'Five-and-twenty miles seem a long way to go for one evening's amusement,' he said in a lukewarm tone, 'and we are so busy; I don't know that Mr Hamilton can spare me.'

'Spare you!' laughed Robert; 'of course I can. Why, we think nothing here of riding twenty or thirty miles to see our friends; if we did, we should soon forget what human faces were like. Of course you must go, and I'll stop at home and take care of my old lady.'

It was therefore settled that Jack and Phyllis were to ride on to the farm of Mr Campbell on the morning of the ball, and were to leave their horses there, and be driven on to Glen Assynt in his light wagon. Phyllis's dress was to be sent on before in one of the drays to Campbellton, where she could change her riding-habit for ball-costume. This arrangement made the young Scotchman's face glow more deeply than ever with pleasure; while Jack, who now disliked the whole thing excessively, for reasons best known to himself, looked positively sulky. He went out to his work after dinner without saying a word to any one, and when he came back in the evening young Campbell was gone.

He was sitting in the front veranda after tea, smoking and looking at the lake, in which one or two stars were beginning to be reflected, when Phyllis came out and stood beside him for a minute or two. 'I am afraid,' she said gently, 'that you think the going to this dance will be a great deal of trouble, and that you will not care for it much after you are there. Please do not mind going just for me. I would rather give it up than that you should be bothered.'

Jack felt thoroughly ashamed of himself in a moment. It flashed into his mind how hard the girl worked, how little amusement she had, such as other young girls he had known were used to,

and he took himself to task severely for his selfishness. And besides, as he looked up into her face, he thought it looked wondrously fair in the twilight, and that a shadow of trouble or regret lay in the sweet and gentle eyes.

'Why Phyllis,' he said, rising and taking her hand, 'what a selfish sort of fellow you must think me! Do you think I can't see how much you do for us all every day, and could I refuse to do such a little thing for you? Of course I will go with you. Who should go to take care of you, if your brother did not?'

It was the first time it had occurred to him that such a relationship might really be said to exist between them, and by a sort of intuition he guessed that by making use of it he might establish a more satisfactory state of things, and draw aside the veil of coldness and reserve which seemed to separate them. For lately he had taken to thinking that Phyllis was more reserved than ever with him. With Robert and Bessie she was frankly affectionate. To little Bertie she was a sort of second mother. To every living thing about the place, from Sam the lad-of-all-work, to the dogs that came to lie by her kitchen fire, and the chickens that ran about her feet in the yard, she was kind and friendly. Only Jack felt that somehow he was left out in the cold; and though he often told himself that he was by no means in love with her, he nevertheless longed to share in this universal friendliness. Her face brightened at once, though she drew away her hand gently.

'You are very good,' she said, 'and of course I shall be glad to have you with me, if you will be so kind.' Then she tripped back into the house, and Jack went on with his pipe and his meditations.

'She is very gentle and beautiful and good, and she is my sister—almost. Why should we not be friendly and fond of one another in that way? Any man might be proud of such a sister. I will be kind to her, and try to make her like me a little better. And if she chooses to like some one else better still, even if it were that idiot who was here to-day'—

Why did he break off his musings so abruptly at this point, and get up from his lounging-chair, and walk off at rather a quick pace towards the shore of the lake, where he paced up and down for half an hour? And why had he called John Campbell, who was a remarkably sensible young fellow, an 'idiot'? Probably he did not exactly know; but at the end of the half-hour, he went back to the house and called 'Phyllis!'

When she came out, surprised and inquiring, he said: 'Come and shew me where you want your garden to be; I'm going to make it for you.'

'Oh, that would indeed be charming!' she exclaimed delightedly. Then her face falling a little: 'But you are so busy, and so tired when you come back from your work.'

'A little extra tiredness won't hurt me,' he said, laughing. 'Besides, I'm getting used to it now; you needn't despise me any more on that score.'

'Despise you!' she said, looking hurt. 'Why, I never thought of such a thing! Outdoor work tires every one who is not used to it, just at first. Only, I was sorry for you sometimes.'

'Come then,' he said, 'and let us measure out the garden.' And the two spent a pleasant hour under the silver light of the moon measuring and

debating; while Robert and Bessie sat in the veranda and looked on well pleased.

CHAPTER V.—THE GLAMOUR AWAKES.

The next day was Sunday; and a long quiet dreamy day Sunday usually is in those far regions which, like Hamilton Farm, are beyond the sound of church-bells. Everything rests: the horses in their wide paddocks; the sheep-dogs by the kitchen hearth; the men, glad to repose after the week's labour, stretched out on grassy knoll, with pipe and book for companions, and thoughts that often stray into dreamland or travel back to scenes which have been left far behind on life's journey, and faces that may be seen no more on earth.

This especial Sunday rose fair and bright, and though the sun was hot, his rays were tempered by a cool breeze which blew from off the waters of the lake. Australia's climate is certainly changeable, alternating between fierce blinding heat and dust-storm and rain and cold, all succeeding one another with extraordinary rapidity. Yet she gives very often such perfect days as are to be found in few other countries in like abundance; days when merely to be alive is a delight, the air one breathes is so delicious, so balmy, so invigorating, full as it were of the very essence of life; when never a cloud flecks the deep arch of blue overhead, but the sun rises in the pure golden morning to set in an evening as golden and as pure. And oh! the beauty of those nights when, after the brief gloaming, star after star gleams out, and pays homage to the Southern Cross; and the moon rises above the hills and mounts up into the sky, large, glorious, silvery, casting white lights and black shadows over all the sleeping world! How often on such nights have we lingered out-of-doors in that enchanting atmosphere of balmy air and silver moonlight; of orange-blossom and roses; deeming it almost a sin to retire to the sleep and darkness of indoors, to lose so many hours of Paradise!

The early dinner was cleared away, and Phyllis made her appearance in the veranda, neatly dressed in a fresh muslin gown, and with a pretty little straw hat on her head, in place of the everlasting sun-bonnet which was so obnoxious to Jack.

'Where are you going, Phyll?' asked Robert, who was extended at full length on a lounging-chair, with a book on his knees which he pretended to read.

'To see Mrs Murphy and her twins,' answered Phyllis, holding up the basket she carried in her hand, 'and to take them some soup.'

'Tell her, with my kind regards, to call the twins Castor and Pollux,' said Robert, lazily closing his eyes.

'I think they are girls,' answered Phyllis, laughing; 'but I daresay she would think the names did just as well.'

'May I come?' asked Jack, suddenly appearing at the door of his room, dressed in the original gray tweed suit in which we first saw him.

'O yes,' said Phyllis, 'if you care.'

'And if you don't mind standing god-father to Castor and Pollux,' added Robert, opening his eyes.

'As if Mrs Murphy would have a heretic for any such important relationship!' said Phyllis

laughing, as the two young people walked off together, Jack having taken possession of the basket.

Keeping his eyes open sufficiently long to watch them to the top of the nearest rising ground, the settler marked the pair with an approving look. How well, thought he, they look together—both so straight and tall; for tall woman as Phyllis was, Jack's dark head towered considerably above hers.

'It's a pity they don't seem to see it,' he mused, just as he was sinking off into a comfortable doze. 'To-day it has been better; but up till last night, really they always seemed on the verge of a quarrel. Perhaps it's a good way to begin—perhaps'—But here all future possibilities were lost in dreamland.

Jack had not walked very far when he began to reflect that this was the first time he had ever been positively alone with Phyllis. Hitherto their intercourse had been limited to such matter-of-course words as must pass between dwellers in the same household, or to some brief question and answer connected with farm interests. But now they were away together on the grassy uplands of the island, with the lake at their feet, the blue hills in the distance, a bright sun overhead, and a southern wind blowing in their faces. He wondered very much what they would talk of during the hour or two they were to be together. What used he to talk to girls about at home in England? The weather, boat-races, theatres, the opera, Tennyson's last poem, the last month's magazines, the new exhibition of the Royal Academy. But none of those subjects seemed suitable, or indeed possible just at present, and he stole a glance at his companion, as if he would guess her thoughts. Not guessing them, he set about thinking for himself. His first thought was that she looked very pretty in her fresh muslin and little hat; and his next was that he might as well tell her so.

'How nice you look in that dress, Phyllis,' he said. 'And do you know, that hat is an immense improvement on the one I saw you first in.'

She coloured, but only slightly, and her eyes met his with a bright smile. 'When you took me for an aboriginal,' she said, laughing.

'Not quite so bad as that. Why, the moment I saw your face and heard you speak, I knew you were a lady.'

'I am glad of that,' she said, blushing rather more deeply than before. 'I have often wondered'—

'Wondered?' he asked, seeing that she paused.

'How curiously everything must have struck you, when you first arrived. And whether you are not growing very tired of this kind of life, and do not long to get back to England and civilisation again.'

'I have asked myself that question sometimes,' answered Jack thoughtfully, 'and as far as I can tell, the answer is No! I like this life. I like its freedom, its thorough independence, and above all its fullness of work. It is good to feel that every day one has earned the food he eats and the sleep he enjoys, by sheer hard labour, and labour that really produces something.'

'But could you not have done that at home,' Phyllis asked, 'and have had the pleasures of civilisation too?'

'Not so well. You have no idea how crowded everything is there, how every inch of ground, every profession is occupied by men pushing and struggling for a bare existence. I declare,' he exclaimed, drawing a long breath, 'the very remembrance brings a suffocating feeling, and makes me thankful for this wide free country, where one can throw out one's arms and breathe and grow.'

'I am glad you like it,' she said. 'I thought that you were feeling it dull, and missing a good many things.'

He glanced at her rather sharply. Had she been watching him, he wondered, and noticing when he looked tired and cast down, all this time, while he had thought she heeded him less than the commonest labourer about the place?

How little we understand even of the people we live with, with whom we sit at the same table and hold familiar converse! What a sealed book their hearts are to us, how we misinterpret their thoughts, misjudge their actions! And how well for us it would be if we could only forbear our judgments until motives and causes were fully revealed to us. Something of this was passing through the mind of James Hamilton as he walked on silently by Phyllis's side in the sunshine, and dreamily watched the faint breeze stir the waters of the lake and bend the tall reeds. When he next spoke his tone had gained something; a new feeling had taken possession of him in that brief silence, and he could never again feel to Phyllis exactly as he had felt before.

'Of course there are things one misses here,' he said. 'Books and pictures and intercourse with thinking men, and much of what goes by the name of civilisation. The question is, do we not have things here that are worth all that, and more? Is it not a nobler thing to work with all one's might at the building up of a civilisation in this new world, than to sit down tamely at home, and enjoy the blessings of the old civilisation, which after all is very much overdone?'

'I think so,' replied Phyllis, smiling with her blue eyes into his dark ones, which were flashing just then with hope and spirit. 'But then you see I am different from you. I came to this so young that I have never really known anything better. This is my home, and I love it, and think it the best country on the face of the earth. But with you it is different.'

'Well, after all,' he answered, smiling back to her, 'the best country is where home is; and one can make a home here or anywhere, if one is with the friends whom one loves.'

'Yes,' she said sedately; 'this would have been very different for you, if Robert and Bessie had not been here.'

'It would be different if you were not here,' rose to his thoughts, and almost to his lips, but he checked the utterance. 'I have no right to say such things to her,' he thought, 'and never may have the right. I will not disturb this new peace that has come between us, by being hasty.' So he began to talk to her of home-life and of his student days, from thence diverging into a discussion of books they had both read, and some which he promised to get out from England for her. The way to Mrs Murphy's hut, built in true colonial style of 'wattle and dab,' seemed marvellously short; and when Phyllis went inside to sit with the mother of many children, he lay

down at full length on the turf of a grassy knoll just within call of the cabin door. A solitary gum-tree reared its majestic height on the slope of this knoll and sheltered him from the sun; the glimmering water stretched away from the shore, the tall reeds on the bank nodded and whispered to one another. A great stillness brooded over everything, and in this stillness perhaps the young man began to realise something of what was going on in his heart, and to understand that there was dawning in him for Phyllis something more than a brother's love.

His meditations were interrupted by little shy footsteps, which stole very slowly towards him over the grass. He lay perfectly still; but glancing through his eyelashes perceived two little figures drawing near, pausing now and then in a breathless silence to see if he would move. Jack felt irresistibly reminded of Gulliver as he lay asleep, and the Lilliputians who pinioned him to the ground with their tiny cords. However, he kept still; and the two small figures, encouraged by his seeming harmlessness, advanced cautiously and sat down near his feet, where they began to talk in whispers.

'Sure an' it's the grand gentleman he is, Patsy! Did ye iver see the loike afore?'

'Sich beautiful boots, Jan! Moy, don't they just shine!'

'An' the little gowld buttons to his shirt, Patsy! Ah! he had more money than he know'd what to do wid, when he hammered it into them things!'

Here Jack's lips twitched and betrayed him; so he put out his hand and clutched Patsy before the queer little Antipodean-Irishman had time to run away. Jan stood by his brother valiantly, though he glanced at the cabin behind him, and thought of the bit of open country he would have to cross to get to it.

'Now tell me,' said Jack, 'what your names are, and what you are doing here?'

Patsy put his finger in his mouth and hung down his head; but Jan answered boldly: 'I'm Jan, an' he's Patsy; an' we're here because the Virgin Mary wint in to see mother.'

'Who?' said Jack, opening his eyes.

Patsy, who was more matter of fact than his brother, whispered: 'It's Miss Phyllis from the big house, sir.'

'But mother says,' persisted Jan, 'that the Holy Virgin is a beautiful lady with a blue gown and yellow hair. An' isn't Miss Phyllis that same? I always think of Miss Phyllis when I says my prayers sir.'

'You might think of a worse thing,' said Jack, laughing to himself that the heretic maiden with her golden-brown hair and grave and gentle eyes had become the ideal of these lonely Catholic children, who had never been inside a chapel, never seen even a picture of the Maiden Mother to whom they were taught to pray.

'Natural enough, though,' he thought, 'that the only beautiful face they have ever seen should become to them the type of her whom they have been taught to regard as the essence of all that is divine in womanhood.'

Chatting familiarly to the two funny wise little men, he dispelled the lingering remains of their shyness. Then they told him of their baby sisters, who had come mysteriously one night, and been

discovered next morning fast asleep in the cradle. Then in return he told them that ever fresh ever beautiful story of a Babe who came one night to a poorer house even than theirs. When Phyllis came out of the cabin she found Patsy nestled close to one side of Jack and Jan to the other, while their pure child-eyes were fixed on his face. Nor did he leave without just one kiss offered to and accepted by the two humble grandchildren of old Ireland. And glad was he afterwards that he had touched those two little faces with his lips; for a curious feeling of affection came over him for those little lonely boys, who prayed to the most beautiful and gracious being they had ever known—his sister Phyllis.

THE CORPS OF COMMISSIONAIRES.

It has lately been stated as a fact beyond all dispute, that after the close of a great war there is always an increase of crime in the countries which have been engaged in it; owing firstly to the suspension of all the nobler faculties which the arts of peace develop in the minds and souls of men; and secondly to the number of unemployed soldiers, who failing the ability or means to obtain an occupation, become highwaymen, tramps, and idlers.

This was the state of things which existed to some extent after the Crimean war, when—to our discredit be it said—it was no unusual sight to see men with missing limbs, and with medals on their breasts, actually engaged in *sweeping the crossings* of our London streets; one man in particular, who wore on his breast, beside the Crimean, French, and Turkish war-medals, the Victoria Cross, and who had lost a leg in the service of his country, was engaged for many years as a crossing-sweeper opposite the principal entrance to Buckingham Palace in St James's Park! This was the sort of thing which moved the generous heart of Captain Edward Walter, a retired army veteran, to form the now celebrated corps of Commissionaires, whose organisation and public utility have thoroughly deserved the full measure of success which has attended it.

It was in the year 1859—about the time the Volunteer movement began—that this benevolent officer collected a few discharged soldiers of good character, drew up a set of rules for their guidance, and set them to work to endeavour to get honest employment as public servants in any capacity, their chief duties at first being as messengers for City houses or at the mansions of private gentlemen.

Such was the usefulness of the new institution, and the public appreciation of the smart, neat, and soldierly appearance of the men as they moved about the streets in the faithful and zealous performance of their tasks, that their numbers had increased to about four hundred by the year 1862. This was the period of the second great Exhibition; and many of the men were engaged in the building in all capacities, from money and ticket takers down to messengers and 'care-takers.' Kindness, care, and an ordinary degree of comfort, combined with a strict application to a system of self-discipline and thrift, by which the corps has been made self-supporting—these are the grand secrets of Captain Walter's success with his famous regiment of Commis-

sionaires; secrets which might be applied with considerable advantage to many an institution and many a class of men in this country.

The Commissionaires now form a goodly regiment, and are employed by nearly if not all the public departments, where they are engaged as door-keepers, night-watchmen, messengers, &c.; their engagements being as permanent and as lucrative as such places generally are, and the pay being as follows: sergeants (first-class), twenty-five shillings per week; sergeants (second-class), one guinea; corporals, one pound; first-class Commissionaires, eighteen shillings. And for temporary employment, the tariff is as follows, though this is liable to alteration: sergeants, four shillings per day or three shillings the half-day; corporals and first-class Commissionaires, three shillings and sixpence per day and two shillings and sixpence the half-day; but if sent away from their district, sergeants get four shillings and sixpence per day or twenty-five shillings per week; and corporals, &c. twenty-two shillings per week. Lately, however, such has been the demand for these men, that the committee, which consists of officers and others of social influence, have not been able to meet it, although salaries to the extent of two pounds and more per week have been offered. The Prince of Wales, who has always taken great interest in the corps, constantly employs some of its members; and there is not a fashionable club or place of resort in the metropolis which is without its regular Commissionaire.

The following are some of the rules or regulations upon which the corps is founded: 'Every candidate for the post of Commissionaire must have served either in the army, navy, militia, or police, and be in the receipt of a pension. Those who have been severely wounded having the preference for admission to the corps; no pensioner, however, being permitted to join it whose character cannot bear the strictest investigation.

'In the case of soldiers of impaired health whose temporary pensions have expired, a deposit of twenty-five pounds must be made in the savings-bank of the corps, which sum will be liable to forfeiture in any instance of dishonesty proved in a court of justice; but will be returned to the Commissionaire on his resignation, subject, however, to deduction for any debts due to the corps.

'On entering the corps, every man must sign, in presence of a witness, a formal document binding himself strictly to conform to all the rules and regulations made by the commandant for the maintenance of discipline and order, and understand that he has no claim for payment of any kind, that he is dependent solely on his own exertions, and that, if offered charitable aid from any source, he must not take it without leave.'

A copy of these rules is furnished to every member, who deposits the sum of one pound as a guarantee of good conduct; and each man pays to the corps out of his earnings, eight shillings and sevenpence per month, or five pounds three shillings per annum. This includes six shillings and sixpence per month for the use of clothing (which belongs to the corps), and two shillings and one penny subscription to the general and sick funds. Besides this, if a man obtains a permanent situation, he contributes ten shillings to the general fund. This fund pays for the working

expenses of the corps—namely, wages for the staff-sergeants, clerks, stationery, barrack-rent, clothing, &c. The sick fund entitles the man, in the event of illness, to an allowance of seven shillings per week for four months, and half that amount for the next two months, after which all payments cease.

The corps is divided into first and second class men, each class wearing a distinguishing badge; the men who have been non-commissioned officers in the army wearing the chevrons appertaining to their rank. Every man must belong to some religious denomination, and attend church or chapel, absence from church parade being punished with a fine of one shilling. Absence from muster parade results in a fine of two shillings; from an ordinary parade, sixpence; late for parade, one penny; five minutes late, twopenny; being improperly dressed or untidy in appearance, threepence. Refusing to obey an order meets with the punishment of dismissal; while promotion is earned by good conduct and ability. Thus it will be seen that the military spirit pervades the whole system on which this excellent corps is founded. The committee guarantee the safety of all property intrusted to the men for delivery, to the value of ten pounds with the privates, and twenty pounds with the non-commissioned officers. The public, however, must beware of sham Commissionaires; and as a preventive to fraud, each veritable Commissionaire is provided with a ticket, which he must produce if demanded.

The corps has also a good band, which is formed of musicians who have been in the army or navy, and its services are in frequent request at private entertainments throughout the country. During the first few years of the corps' existence the band used to play for two or three hours every evening in St James's Park, to the delight of thousands of people; but for some reason or other, this harmless performance was prohibited by the 'powers that be.' As an instance of the popularity of the band, we may mention that its receipts have amounted to several hundred pounds per annum, and that this money is divided amongst the musicians according to their proficiency.

The barrack of the Commissionaires is situated in Exchange Court Strand, a place which is totally inadequate to the extended operations and utility of the corps, which, should another war unfortunately break out, must attain to considerable proportions.

Many of the men are decorated with medals for service in the field, and some are conspicuous by the loss of an arm or an eye, or by ugly scars on their heads; shewing that they have at some time or another gained, by suffering, a title to the gratitude and good-will of their countrymen. There are heroes too in the corps, many of whom have had almost a lifetime of warfare, as in the case of one man who was present in not less than twenty-eight actions during his twenty-one years' service.

The affairs of the corps are administered by an executive board or committee, which as we have already stated, consists of men of social influence and exalted station; and the whole matter is under the patronage of H.R.H. the Field-marshal Commanding-in-chief. In addition to the committee, there are 'governors' (among whom is the Prince of Wales), who qualify by the payment of twenty-five pounds; while a regiment or battalion pay-

ing the same amount also obtains a perpetual governorship. Such an institution as this, relying as it does on faithful and useful industry, is in our opinion deserving of public approbation.

GHOST-STORIES UNVEILED.

IN former times, ghost-stories constituted much of the fireside talk; the weird tale was told of how a spectre clothed in appropriate white was seen to appear, and in due course to vanish; and the hearers, duly impressed with the apparent truth of a tale, for which no natural reason was vouchsafed, became themselves in a measure forced to believe. Science and common-sense are, however, now robbing these absurd stories of much of their glamour, by explaining in a simple straightforward way what by many has hitherto been held to be supernatural and therefore unaccountable. With these remarks we proceed to offer a few instances of explained ghost-stories kindly supplied to us by a contributor. He says:

What I am going to do is simply to give some instances in which what might have made a capital ghost-story, proved to be nothing of the kind, and to draw from thence the inference that all such stories could, if only we were acquainted with *all* the facts, be accounted for by natural causes.

I have myself been sorely puzzled to account for what I have seen. On one occasion I was passing by a cemetery on my way to a distant part of my parish. The night was dark and foggy; and as I walked along the road close to the iron fence, I perceived within the inclosure, apparently but a few yards off, a body of dim light that seemed to come up from the ground. Now my impressions were all in favour of ghosts, and if my judgment also had been equally in favour, I should have had a ghost-story to tell about that place. But I was determined to seek an explanation of the phenomenon; so I went up to the railings and looked hard at the light, but could make nothing of it. At the same time I became conscious of a dull sound proceeding from the ground where it stood. I could not understand it; and there I stood peering in until my ears suddenly gave me a clue to the mystery, for I fancied I detected the thud of a mattock. And such it was. The sexton was working against time to dig for a large vault, and the mysterious light was nothing more or less than that of his lantern, some feet below the surface, which threw up into the foggy air a volume of strange misty brightness. But really it made a very creditable ghost.

Another adventure I had was more laughable, but not less perplexing at the time. The night was very dark indeed; and as I took a sudden turn in the road, I saw a feebly illuminated figure moving slowly some distance in advance and in the same direction with myself. My first impression was that some one was going to try to frighten me; so I grasped my stick, intending, as boys say, to 'whack in' to the culprit. But as I drew nearer, the figure stopped; and in a moment or two the illumination became somewhat brighter. I got close up to it, prepared to strike, but for the life of me could not tell what it was. I passed it close, and looked round into it, and found it was an old woman going home from a day's washing.

She had on, poor soul, a very attenuated cloak, through which the light of the lantern she was carrying feebly penetrated, and when she had stopped to snuff the candle with her fingers, the light of course burned brighter. She was very deaf, and had not heard my footsteps; so that when I spoke I frightened her, I fear, more than she had frightened me.

Talking of not hearing footsteps in the dark. I remember once alarming a neighbour most unintentionally; and had he not discovered the true cause, he might to this day have had a tale of mystery to unfold upon the subject. I was walking briskly home one night with a map—mounted with rings for hanging it to a wall—under my arm and goloshes on my feet. The rings kept up a sort of clicking noise as I went, while the goloshes caused me to glide along the damp lane with the noiselessness of a cat. But I never thought of either circumstance till afterwards. Hearing footsteps in front, I fancied it might be my neighbour, it being about his time for coming home, so I pushed on. But the quicker I went the farther off he seemed. I went faster still, but still I came not up with him; until, determined to overtake him, I set off running at a brisk pace and only reached him as he was passing into his gate, having, beyond the possibility of doubt, made a run for it himself. Whether he took the clicking of the rings, unaccompanied by the sound of footsteps, for the clicking of a pistol or the mysterious rattle of a fancied ghost, I cannot say; but this is certain, that if he had only stopped or even not run away, he would have found out the cause of what was undoubtedly a curious accompaniment on a dark night.

A gentleman living in a country-house which I had once inhabited, wrote to ask me whether during my residence there I had ever heard any reports of its being 'haunted.' He did not believe in such things himself, he said, but he always liked when he heard of anything of the kind, to investigate the matter as far as possible. It was a very sensible thing to do; and I was able to give him a satisfactory explanation. It was news to me that the house had this evil reputation; but when I heard of it, it immediately occurred to my mind how it was to be accounted for. It so happened that a certain mischievous female member of my family had, towards the latter part of my stay in that house, been guilty of the cruelty of terrifying the servants almost out of their wits. She appeared one night in their room covered over with a sheet, which sheet was raised high over her head by means of a stick, to the end of which was fastened a bull's-eye lantern—a ghost of commanding stature and terrific gaze. It is very wrong to play such tricks, as the consequences might be serious to some weak minds. In this case, however, no harm was done, except that the servants were unalterably settled in the persuasion that they had seen a ghost, and that they had, as a matter of course, inoculated the village with their own firm belief that the house was haunted.

Little things are apt to be magnified, and the simplest things frequently become mysterious, in the stillness and darkness of the night. When living in London, I was one night aroused by my sister coming into my room to tell me that some one was trying to break into the house by

the front-door. I looked out of the window, but could see no one, though a low jarring noise could be heard. The statutory procession was formed. First came I, holding a poker warily, and looking anxiously for a human head; then came a servant, who had first given the alarm, lifting aloft a candle to aid me in the search; and last of all came my sister, bold as a lion, though pale as death. As we slowly descended thus in battle-array, I could distinctly hear the fitful jarring sound from the region of the street-door; but I declare I could not in the least make out the cause of it until I had got quite up to the door, and then the mystery was solved. One of the family had come home late, fastened the door as he thought, put up the chain, and gone to bed. But the door had not been fastened; the bolts though shot, had not been sent home, and so the door kept swinging backwards and forwards in the gentle night-breeze as far as the chain would let it. Had the house been reputed 'haunted,' it would have suggested a ghost, just as anything strange will suggest one where the mind is suitably impressed with the idea of the thing. Thus a relative of mine used to relate how frightened he had been when a boy in coming down the stairs of an old tower of ghostly fame, at the top of which he and other boys had been amusing themselves until the shades of evening surprised them. It was his fate to bring up the rear, and he no doubt felt in consequence his exposure to the enemy in black, and sure enough he heard a hollow step behind him keeping step exactly after him; when he hurried, that hurried; when he paused at some difficulty in the descent, that paused also; but when at length he emerged from the darkness with a final rush, no ghost came out after him. But he recollected that he had got a bag of ginger-bread nuts in the hinder pocket of his long great-coat; and the flapping of that in the stairs was the mysterious sound that had so alarmed him.

It may be said that instances like these, in which what seemed at first mysterious and ghost-like was perfectly accounted for by natural causes, can never, how many soever they be, disprove the reality of far more remarkable appearances which are vouched for on the most respectable testimony, and which have never been accounted for on any theory, apparently explainable. Still, their reality as mysteries depends on the credibility of the testimony in their favour, and a complete knowledge of all the circumstances. All I maintain is, that the frequent and, in my own experience, the invariable explanation of things of this sort (that at first looked unaccountable) by natural causes, sets us in the right direction for inquiry, and affords presumptive evidence that all such things might, if only we knew all the facts, be similarly explained. It must be remembered, moreover, that while it is true that far more marvellous ghost-stories than those I have related have been solemnly placed on record, it is equally true on the other hand that the operation of purely natural causes can furnish explanations far more subtle and complete than those which sufficed to dissipate all my ghosts. The phenomena of Nature in all their varieties of combination can never be fully known; while as regards the credibility of witnesses, we want to know not only that their veracity is un-

impeachable, but also that their judgment is sound, and their health, both bodily and mental, not abnormal. I remember a friend telling me with the most evident sincerity that he felt sure he should succeed in some enterprise he had begun because he had just seen seven ducks waddling one after the other. He was an excitable man, just then in highly nervous condition; and if he had said he had seen seven ghosts instead of seven ducks, I should have believed *him*, but set the ghosts down to mental aberration.

What condition the witnesses were in who saw the following 'well-accredited' feat of a ghost, I will not venture to determine. The story is related by an enthusiastic believer in and even admirer of ghosts of every sort and kind, and the ghost and witnesses are all phlegmatic Germans. 'One night as Kezer lay in his bed, and the servant was standing near the glass door in conversation with him, to his utter amazement he saw a jug of beer which stood on a table in a room at some distance from him, slowly lifted to a height of about three feet, and the contents poured into a glass that was standing there also, until the latter was half full. The jug was then gently replaced, and the glass lifted and emptied, as by some one drinking; whilst the servant exclaimed in terrified surprise: "Look, it swallows!" The glass was quietly replaced, and not a drop of beer was to be found on the floor.'

No doubt there was not; and let us hope the ghost was all the better for having taken only the half-glass. But what scrutinising of the witnesses we should require before believing such nonsense as this! What, we repeat, must have been their *condition*!

Even without anything abnormal or diseased, there unquestionably are mysteries of our nature which we cannot fathom, and which perhaps we had better not try to comprehend, but which when brought to notice by accident or design, might seem preternatural. Thus the power of what is called 'second-sight,' of which remarkable instances have been given by persons not likely to be deceived, is not really, as some have supposed, a preternatural gift, but may be accounted for simply as an extraordinary faculty possessed by some, under certain conditions, of reading what is in the mind of another when brought in contact voluntarily and for that very purpose with the person who has the gift. There are, in like manner, many remarkable faculties naturally possessed by people as part of their peculiar constitution which, if only we were aware of the fact, would explain many a circumstance that bears on the face of it the stamp of mystery. I have a friend who cannot sleep unless his head is turned towards the north. The first time he slept in my house his bed was against a south wall, but he was not aware of it. In the morning he told me he could not sleep until he had placed the bolster and pillow where his feet had been; and so the clothes were found arranged, to the great amusement of the housemaid.

The inference I draw then is: that the true explanation of all ghost-stories, however marvellous, is to be found in natural causes, in a knowledge of *all* the facts and circumstances of each particular case. These explanations will sometimes, as in the instances I have given, lie on the surface; sometimes they will lie more deeply

within the mysteries of our complex nature and the surroundings, and have to be studied and searched out; and sometimes they may be so deep down as to be quite beyond the reach of either our powers or opportunities of investigation, though doubtless still perfectly natural. But when we consider how credulous human nature is in regard to mysteries that have no higher authority than that of men, and that are only morbid and unwholesome in their tendencies; and when, moreover, we take into account how almost unlimited are the resources in nature for the explanation of what at first seemed supernatural, it appears to me to be decidedly better, safer, manlier, more rational, and at the same time more respectful towards what is truly supernatural, to relegate all ghost-stories without exception and without hesitation to the domain of wonders that have a purely earthly origin.

THE OPEN VERDICT.

It is a very pleasant feeling that of liberty from all business care of whatsoever kind, if only for a few weeks, when one's avocations for the remainder of the year confine one to a busy brain-devouring city like this mighty London of ours; and therefore it was with no slight degree of anticipated enjoyment that some year or two ago I accepted an oft-repeated invitation to visit an old school-chum, Dr Henry Gladden, at the village of Claystone, in one of our northern counties.

I arrived, however, at an unfortunate period, and found that what I had pictured to myself as being a happy jolly country-house, was at that time a house of mourning: Gladden's uncle and predecessor, old Mr Williams, had died only a few hours before my arrival. I would willingly have gone on my way; but this my friend with his wife would not hear of, and everything was done to render my visit as cheerful as circumstances would permit. I attended the funeral; and as we turned to leave the churchyard, was much struck by an expression of Gladden's, which appeared to be uttered without any knowledge of it on his part. It was: 'The grave has closed over the last.' I felt greatly tempted to ask for an explanation, but for obvious reasons checked my curiosity.

A few mornings afterwards, while accompanying my friend on his round of visits, we came before an old large red-brick house that stood close beside the road, being separated from it merely by a hedge and small lawn.

'Why, what's this?' exclaimed Gladden, as we saw a number of workmen engaged in erecting scaffolding, digging up the lawn, and otherwise demolishing the place. 'What are all these men about?—Hi!' (calling to one of the people) 'What is it you are doing here?'

'Pulling down 't' house for railway,' was the laconic response.

'Then the final link is being broken,' mused my companion as we drove on.

My curiosity was again aroused, and this time I resolved to satisfy it, so I came to the point at once by thus addressing my friend: 'Hal, you are not generally given to ambiguous or unsatisfactory sentences, and therefore—if I am not presuming too much—would you mind telling me

to what you alluded in your last remark, and the equally strange one uttered at your uncle's funeral?'

'Well, Dick,' he replied, 'it is a strange story, and one perhaps that does not reflect much credit upon my poor uncle; but as the actors in this little drama have passed away, and even the very scene of action will in a few days be ploughed up, I may and will set your mind at rest on the subject. You remember that after I had walked the hospitals in town, I came down here partly on a visit to, and partly to study under my late uncle. But I found a greater attraction than any I had anticipated, in the person of my cousin Lucy, with whom I soon fell over head and ears in love. Her father was not averse to it, and things were shortly in good train for our marriage. I was to be taken into partnership by my uncle when that event took place; and the day before the deeds were signed, the old gentleman called me into his room, and narrated the following story, which will explain my late expressions, and which I will tell in his own words.

"Harry," said my uncle, "as you are now to be my son-in-law and partner, I think it but right you should become acquainted with an adventure which befell me in my younger days, and for my share in which—justifiable as it then appeared to me—I have never ceased to reproach myself. At the time I am speaking of, I was studying medicine at Manchester, but while on a visit to a distant relative, a Dr Seyton, who occupied this very house"—('You see, Dick, this is quite a family practice,' parenthesised Gladden)—"I was one night awakened by a shake of the shoulder, and looking up saw, by the light of the moon, which streamed in at my window, Dr Seyton standing by my bedside. 'Come, get up,' said he. 'I have been sent for; and as Poor' (his assistant) 'was out last night, I'll get you to accompany me now.' While he descended to the surgery and stables, I speedily donned my habiliments; and by the time I reached the front gate, the doctor was seated in his gig waiting for me. It was a most magnificent moonlight night.

"Along the clear white road, as fast as horse could draw us, on we went; past cottage, farm, and mansion; past pond and park and stream; beneath long avenues of trees that bordered the roadside and drooped over us, now veiling all in shadow, now shewing some stray moonbeam that danced upon the quivering boughs to the soft cadence of the night-breeze. Sharp and crisp rose the echo of our horse's tread; and as we came within sight of our destination we heard the gallop of another horse; and as we sped past a turning, saw a horseman riding up—as we imagined, the messenger who had been despatched for the doctor, and who had said he must return by way of Merlton. We stopped before Maseborough House, the residence of the Honourable Frederick Wellesley, presumptive heir to the title and estates of the Earl of Caultdale. There was great commotion in the house; for its owner, who had been ailing for some time past, had that night been taken seriously ill; and while the doctor ascended to the sick-chamber and our horse and trap were put up, I lit a cigar and stood under the veranda, looking out upon the night and musing. Presently, one of the domestics emerged from the house and passed out into the road, walking briskly on; and just as

my cigar was out, I heard Dr Seyton's voice inquiring for me.

'Take this,' said he, handing me a paper, 'and ride home as fast as you can. Get Poor to make it up; and come back with all speed: it is life or death. Here is one of Mr Wellester's horses for you.' I then perceived a groom standing with one ready saddled at the gate, on which I mounted and galloped off.

'For upwards of a mile the road lay open and clear enough; but beyond that it was darkly shaded by copses and plantations, through which the moon's rays found little space to shine. I had barely penetrated a dozen yards into this dark and lonely spot before I received a summons to 'stand and deliver.' My horse being very fresh, quite entered into his rider's feelings, and had not the least intention of checking his speed, but continued his journey; while behind came he who bade me 'stand,' threatening to put a bullet in me if I did not draw rein. This only made me urge my animal to greater speed; but my pursuer did his best to keep his word, for he fired, and the bullet just grazed my left arm; and at the same instant a hand was laid upon my horse's bridle so suddenly as to throw him on his haunches and cause me a speedy and ignominious dismount. But be that as it may, it served me a good turn, as I was enabled, not being at all hurt, to slip away in the darkness and conceal myself in the plantation.

'Where is he?' inquired the horseman, riding up.

'Stunned, I s'pose, close by,' was the reply.

'The fiend take him for a plaguy horse-dealer,' rejoined the first speaker, as I fancy they searched for me. At last the same voice said: 'Here, Stevens; I can't see him. Take this note to Walters of Garforth, and bring me back an answer sharp. Take my horse; that other brute might get you recognised.'

'Besides,' said the other, 'the animal has trotted off;' which was true, and much to my regret.

'I will wait for you at the corner of Deadman's Lane,' said the first speaker, as his companion mounted and rode on; and he continued his search for me, little thinking I was creeping away from him through the plantation, out of which at length I emerged, and crossing some fields, regained the road, and had the unspeakable gratification of seeing the horse I had ridden fastened to a gate. This, I suppose, had been done by Stevens when he overtook him. I was soon once more in the saddle, and away we went as fast as horse could go. About three miles from here the road to Garforth branches off to the right; and as I came down the hill towards the turning, I perceived Stevens riding along it. Quick as thought, I threw myself flat on the horse's back, thinking it just possible he might hear the galloping, turn round, and try his hand as a marksman; fortunately he did not; and I arrived at my destination without further adventure. To call up the assistant, have the prescription made up, and attend to the horse, were things speedily done; and ere long I was again in the saddle.

'Now I looked before, beside, and behind me; but all was peaceful. I neared the plantation where I had been stopped; but no one barred my progress; so on I rode, not quite reassured though, for I had not forgotten my pursuer was to wait at

the corner of Deadman's Lane, and I did not know where that was. And now the open road, shining in the clear moonlight, lay bright and untenanted before me. I could distinguish Mazeborough House; and nearer, the lane up which, when coming with Dr Seyton, we had seen a horseman riding. Then it struck me that as that horseman was not the messenger who had been despatched for the doctor, that functionary having arrived before us, it might have been the one who had stopped me, and that that was Deadman's Lane. There was no help for it; I must pass the spot; so feeling for the pistol I had taken the precaution to bring with me this time, I pressed the horse's sides and urged him on. I was not four or five yards from the lane when a man started into the roadway and stood directly in front of me; his figure was slight and his face concealed by a mask; but when he spoke, I recognised the voice that bade me 'stand and deliver.'

'Not quite so fast, young sir,' said he, as he perceived my intention to draw on one side. 'We don't part quite so easily this time. I must have the medicine.'

'What medicine?' I asked.

'Oh! none of that stuff for me. I want that physic you have been sent for; and that bottle I must and will have. So take your choice: that bottle and life; or, producing a pistol, 'this barrel and death!'

'It was a serious moment; but my plan was at once decided on; so putting my hand in my breast, as if for the bottle, I reined close up beside him, and as he eagerly stretched forth his hand for the expected prize, I drew my pistol and fired. I saw him stagger, and in a few moments after, as it seemed, I was at the gate of Mazeborough House.

'Once inside and safe, I had no sooner delivered the medicine to the servant, to be taken up-stairs to Dr Seyton, than the state of tension to which my nerves (not of the strongest) had been strung, gave way, and but for some stimulant from the steward I should have fainted away. However, I soon recovered sufficiently to narrate my adventure to him; but he only laughed at my attributing a literal meaning to the robber's demand for the bottle, and suggested it might be slang for plunder; so I held my peace on that head, feeling the force of the lines:

A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still.

The conversation with the steward soon changed to the family, and I learned from him that the Honourable Frederick Wellester had a half-brother Ernest, a very wild dissipated person, who had been the favourite of the Earl until his character was found out. This Ernest used to live at Caultdale Place, one of the Earl's seats, some fifteen or sixteen miles off; but owing to heavy gambling debts, he was compelled to break up his establishment, and only retained one servant, whom after a time he also discharged. This servant Mr Frederick had engaged, 'and,' continued the steward, 'a very decent servant Stevens was.'

'Stevens!' I ejaculated, very loudly I daresay, for a man looked into the apartment and inquired: 'Did you call, sir?' I was struck dumb; a thousand ideas rushed through my brain. 'No; it was nothing,' replied the steward; and the man disappeared, but not before I had recognised in him one of the men concerned in my late adventure.

Just at this moment there was a great disturbance in the house; and going out to inquire the cause, I found Dr Seyton standing on the staircase interrogating Stevens, the other domestics being grouped round.

'How is this?' exclaimed the doctor. 'How came you to bring me this? It contains a slow poison.'

'The gentleman brought it sir, and of course I gave it to you.'

'But surely Poor could never have made this up. —Look at it, Frank; what do you say?' and Dr Seyton held out the bottle; but before I could reach it Stevens had taken it, and at the same moment his foot slipped, and the phial was dashed to pieces on the ground. The doctor looked annoyed at what appeared to him as an accident; but to me there was design in it; so as he reascended the stairs I called to Stevens, who followed me and the steward into the latter's apartment; when shutting the door and placing my back against it, I thus addressed him: 'How did you become possessed of that bottle you let fall just this minute?' (for I could see it was not the one I brought), 'and for what motive did you stop my horse a few hours since, and who was your companion?' These queries poured out rapidly, not giving time for any distinct reply; but when I paused for a moment he answered with a look of the utmost astonishment: 'Sir, I really do not understand you. The bottle you brought I gave the doctor; and as to stopping your horse and about a companion, I am quite at a loss to know what you allude to.'

'But I need not enumerate the answers by which he fenced off my inquiries; suffice it to say he denied all knowledge whatever of my adventure, and stoutly affirmed he had not left the house since the previous day. What annoyed me still more was the conduct of the steward, who appeared to regard my statements as proceeding either from a weak intellect or a too free use of the means supplied for my recovery.'

'There was nothing to be gleaned from Stevens, so of course he went his way, and I remained with the steward. Soon after daybreak, Dr Seyton rejoined us; the invalid was sleeping, and all immediate danger was over, so orders were given for our horse to be put to. In a few seconds news was brought in of some of the farm-labourers having discovered the lifeless body of a man lying in the road; the remains had been removed to one of the outhouses, whither we proceeded. It was a dreadful spectacle; the features were quite undistinguishable, and presented the appearance of having had some firearm discharged close to them. The steward and Dr Seyton minutely examined the body; and after holding a whispered conversation together, the doctor drew me on one side and advised me not to mention any of the circumstances connected with my late adventure, but to wait until the inquest; then, as medical aid was perfectly useless, we took our departure and drove home.

'Two days afterwards a letter was received desiring our presence at Mazeborough House; and immediately on our arrival I was ushered into Mr Wellester's private room. Our interview was a lengthened one; we then descended to where the inquest was being held. The best report of the proceedings was given in a local paper published a day or two afterwards, which, if I remember rightly, ran

thus: 'As some farm-labourers in the employ of the Honourable Frederick Wellester of Mazeborough were proceeding to their work early on Tuesday morning, they discovered the dead body of a man on the highway. The remains were at once removed to one of the farm-buildings, where they remained till Thursday last, when an inquest was held upon them. No satisfactory evidence was produced tending to throw any light upon either who the unfortunate person was or by what means he met his death, although it is conjectured, owing to the frightful spectacle the face and head presented, that some pistol or gun must have been discharged close to him; but whether by himself or by some one unknown, no clue could be obtained. A pistol ready loaded and capped was found in one of the deceased's pockets, but no papers or other means of identification. A strange fact in connection with this case is the disappearance on the same morning the body was found of one of the domestics, named Stevens, formerly in the service of the Honourable Ernest Wellester (half-brother to the proprietor of Mazeborough House), a gentleman who for some years past has resided on the continent. This occurrence has only tended to throw greater obscurity upon this mysterious affair. In consequence of the utter want of all evidence, the jury returned an open verdict—'Found Dead.'

'Such,' continued Gladden, 'was my uncle's story. You have followed him to the grave, and seen the preparations for razing to the ground Mazeborough House; the Caultdale title has become extinct; the Honourable Frederick Wellester, who succeeded to it, died a few months afterwards, without issue; and although diligent search was made for the next of kin (his half-brother Ernest), no tidings could possibly be obtained of him.'

'But,' said I, 'surely your uncle'—

'Lived at a time when wealth and interest could influence everything and almost everybody.'

'I see,' I rejoined; 'it was what is called "hushed up." But I suppose the body that was found was that of the half-brother Ernest?'

'Precisely.'

A TRIP TO ELEPHANTA.

WHILE my husband and I were waiting for a passage home in one of the troop-ships, we took a bungalow at Colaba Point, and thence made excursions to the various points of interest around Bombay. As we kept a boat, our trips were generally made by water; and the sail back in the cool evening was always refreshing and pleasant.

Just before we started for home, we arranged a small picnic at Elephanta, to see its far-famed caves; and started early, as we wished to spend the day sketching and exploring. The season was early in November, by far the pleasantest time of the year in India, when even to be out in the hottest portion of the day is attended with no danger; and to the cool caves we knew we could, if we found the heat too oppressive, retire, and remain sheltered while the sun was at its height.

We fixed an early hour for our start from Colaba Point; and having superintended the packing of

the tiffin basket, and seen it and the basket of drinkables borne off on the shoulders of coolies—with our own 'khitmutgar' in charge—to be carried down to the ghât before us, we, and the old bearer laden with wraps and sketching materials, followed more leisurely.

In India the weather is not the source of anxiety it so often is at home when any amusement is planned. At this time of the year you are sure of fine weather and a clear unclouded sky overhead; no misgivings need trouble you of a shower occurring in the midst of your enjoyment to spoil it all; neither need you fear waking up to find it a hopelessly wet day; an uncompromising downpour, with an evident intention of continuing persistently the whole day through. Choosing the proper time of the year in India, you can be sure of an enjoyable outing.

On reaching our boat, one of the roomy, short-masted, dark-sailed, lateen-rigged, ordinary fishing craft, we stowed ourselves comfortably away on the various cushions and wraps, counted our belongings, and were off, running down with an agreeable fresh breeze to the Apollo Bunder, where we were to pick up our friends. This place is one of the pleasantest afternoon and evening lounges in Bombay, and a very fashionable resort; here all the would-be fashionables come down to 'eat the wind,' as the natives call taking the air; the ladies loll in their smart carriages in their last new costumes fresh out from home; the gentlemen lounge on the carriage-doors, discussing the last bit of 'gup' (gossip) and relating the freshest scandal out from England. And then there are the pretty little refreshment and luncheon rooms, which look on to the harbour, where you can order the newest and last invented American drink, unless you prefer such old favourites as 'sherry-cobblers' and 'mint-juleps.' There is generally a cool breeze blowing in from the sea, and the look-out across the harbour is always pretty and interesting; so no wonder the place is a favourite with Bombay people. Besides it is the correct thing to do—to go there and lounge about, talk scandal, and carry on mild flirtations; and people in India martyrise themselves to fashion quite as much as they do at home. Pardon the digression.

Picking up our friends, we set sail again for Elephanta; and passed through the shipping of all nations lying at anchor, from the big white troopship just arrived which was to carry us home, to the fleet of Indian fishing-boats, rigged like our own, with their dark-brown sails idly flapping with the breeze, which unhappily for us was fast dying away. We had to take to our oars, or rather the boatmen had, before we reached Elephanta. This island is called by the natives Eharapuri, and is said to owe its European name to the fact of the figure of an elephant standing near the entrance of the temple. This may be only hearsay, for no vestige of any such figure remains. Elephanta is about four or five miles from the mainland, and lies to the east of Bombay. As you approach, it

has a very pretty appearance, being clothed with trees, chiefly palms, quite down to the water's edge. There is no regular landing-place, and the boatmen had to carry us through the mud to the foot of the steps, which ascend directly up to the temple itself. These steps are excavated from the solid rock, and are very steep, so much so indeed, that I was compelled to halt a good many times before I reached the top, and look back to admire the scenery. It is well worth a pause in the ascent. In the far distance stretch a line of mountains, looking hazy in the glare of the noonday heat; they are the Ghats to which the Europeans rush when the heat in Bombay is too overpowering. Beneath our feet the water rippled off into a wide expanse, broken beyond by the dark neck of Colaba Point running out into it, with the lighthouse at the extremity. Then there were the islands of Salsette, Trombay, and Butcher's Island; and then our eyes rested on the great Bombay city, like a large bright jewel resting in a setting of turquoise blue, with between it and us the harbour with its perfect forest of masts. It was a glorious sight, but almost too dazzling at that hour of the day; and even though I was protected by a large 'solar topee,' with a 'pugree' wound round it, and a big white-covered umbrella, I was forced to beat a retreat up the remainder of the steps into the comparative shelter of the cave.

The caves of Elephanta are three in number, and are said to be sacred to the members of the Hindu trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. The largest cave is the centre one, measuring about one hundred and thirty feet in length, the same in breadth, and from fifteen to eighteen feet in height; at the end there is a three-headed figure supposed to be the *Trimurti*, representing the three Hindu deities before-named. The entrance to the great cave was evidently cut out of the solid rock, and two large pillars are left in the original stone as supports. Very likely between them was a gateway; but if so, there are now no remains to be seen. These caves do not give one the idea of natural hollow formations, but appear to be due to art, and seem as though hewn out of the concretion. Such labour must have been a work of time and patience to the excavators. The pillars or columns were doubtless included in the design, roughly hewn out during the excavation, and ornamented afterwards; there are now only about eighteen left.

On each side of the great cave is a lesser one; and these are covered with sculptured remains, representing passages in the life of Siva the destroyer. These rude designs are mystical and weird-looking, and seen in the dim light of the cave, give rather a terrible than picturesque appearance to the interiors of the temples.

Even here, the British tourist has been unable to resist his mischievously disfiguring propensities, duly evidenced by names and initials that are plentifully scrawled over the hands, arms, and even faces of these relics of antiquity. It is not a

matter of especially interesting information to after-comers to know that the proverbial Smith of London has visited this temple in his travels; or that Jones, Brown, Robinson, and others of that ilk think so much of their spirit of adventurous enterprise in arriving at such a place, that they are obliged then and there to inscribe their homely names in the most ill-chosen spots. One cannot help feeling a species of contempt for one's countrymen when their spirit of assertive snobbishness is rendered so unpleasantly apparent. Amid the calm barbaric grandeur of such a scene, it is hardly possible to look with any feelings except those of anger and disgust at the ruthless and useless disfigurement of those sculptured remains, which should from their very antiquity have insured respect. When one thinks of the ages on ages they have stood there, calmly regarding the myriads of human worshippers at their feet, who bent before them only to pass away from kith and kin, and have their places filled by thousands of more devotees, it is impossible not to regard them with some feelings of awe, almost approaching to reverence, as the mind strives to form an idea of time; and with such thoughts as these flitting through the brain, the incongruity of the tourists' hackings and carvings is irritably felt as a desecration.

We had our tiffin in the shade of the rocks near the caves, where it was cool and shady, and from the place we chose we had a splendid prospect of the far-spreading ocean. After tiffin, for which our rambles and exertions had fully prepared us, we went our several different ways, some to sketch, some to explore. I have now before me a sketch which brings the spot vividly to my mind's eye. The afternoon was drawing in as I finished it—the sketch—and a cool breeze was ruffling the water below with gentle ripples; the dipping sun casting its golden gleams across the water, here and there catching the foliage of the different trees, and heightening the varied tints with unwonted splendour; the blue and purple shadows on the distant line of Ghauts softened down the almost too brilliant colouring, while harmonising and giving a tone to the whole scene. I gazed far down below me over the heads of the palm and peepul trees, until my eyes rested on the cool water with its varied changing lines as the sun caught the tips of the dancing ripples; and then my looks wandered again out over the expanse of water, and rested on the purple-shadowed mountains, which even as I looked were caught here and there with touches of gold; and as Sol dipped lower and lower, he bathed one side of the mountain shadow in warm rosy light. It is not in words to describe—at least not in mine—such a fairy scene. But as all pleasant things come to an end, so did that day at Elephanta, and we had to set sail on our return voyage.

There is no twilight in India; the sun sets and it is night. Gloaming is unknown. The sail back with a favourable breeze was refreshingly cool;

and as we neared the harbour, the bright lights from the various anchored ships shone out in the semi-darkness, casting their reflections over the darkened water. After setting down our friends, we made the best of our way back. The breeze freshened more and more, until we were sailing rapidly along; the noise made by the water splashing before our boat's bows mingling harmoniously with sounds of distant music, borne by the cool evening breeze down from one of the vessels lying at anchor in the harbour behind us. Fit ending to an enjoyable day was the stillness of that evening hour, broken only by these soft musical sounds; and as we sailed nearer the landing-place, we could just discern the spire of the Colaba church standing darkly out against the sky; and knew that we were close to our bungalow, had ended another day, and had visited another beautiful Indian scene that was destined to be photographed on our memories.

WITH A PRESENT.

THE Index to a book is small
Compared with what the book contains;
The Head, though but a little ball,
Incloses ardent, thoughtful brains.

And drops of rain are little things
That point to oceans in the sky;
And bridegrooms deal in little rings
As symbols of the strongest tie.

And little blades of grass, though small,
All point to life within the earth—
That life, that in this great round ball
Gives Spring its sweetest, freshest birth.

A woman's eye is but a bead
Set clear and fair 'neath snowy brow,
And yet it shows the fairest creed
Before which men on earth may bow.

And words are little weakling notes
That vanish like a passing sigh,
And yet they tell our sweetest thoughts,
And have told thoughts that will not die.

So this I send is but a mark
Of grateful thoughts and warm esteem—
Is but a little wav'ring spark
Dropped down from friendship's glowing beam!

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1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove ineligible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full Christian name, surname, and address, legibly written.

4th. MS. should be written on one side of the leaf only.

5th. Poetical offerings should be accompanied by an envelope, stamped and directed.

Unless Contributors comply with the above rules, the Editor cannot undertake to return ineligible papers.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.